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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRESSMAN TONY P. HALL INTRODUCES RESOLUTION ON EAST TIMOR

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 10, 1985

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution which expresses the sense of the Congress concerning the situation in East Timor.

December 7, 1985, marks the 10th anniversary of the invasion and occupation of East Timor by neighboring Indonesia. This tragic event, which was carried out by an Indonesian Army equipped largely with American-supplied military equipment, continues to have serious consequences for the inhabitants of East Timor.

More than 5 years ago, it was widely acknowledged that at least 100,000 East Timorese out of a population of less than 700,000 had perished since the Indonesian invasion. Subsequent military operations and related hunger and disease have claimed the lives of thousands more in the ensuing years.

Today, armed conflict continues between the Indonesian Armed Forces and Timorese nationalists who have resisted the takeover of their homeland. International access has been restricted, and information about the situation in East Timor has continued to be difficult to obtain.

In June 1985, Amnesty International published a detailed study entitled, "East Timor, Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances,' Torture and Political Imprisonment," which traced a pattern of widespread human rights violations in East Timor since the time of the invasion.

Statements by Pope John Paul II in July 1984, and the U.S. Catholic Conference in August 1985, have highlighted the growing concern of the international religious community about East Timor. In the United States, Christian Response International, an affiliate of the Zurich-based Christian Solidarity International, has maintained an active role in calling attention to the plight of the suffering Christians in East Timor.

It is also encouraging to note the strong congressional interest in the issue of East Timor. Bipartisan groups of 22 Senators and 123 Representatives in 1984, and 131 Representatives in 1985, signed letters to Secretary of State Shultz and to President Reagan in which they called attention to the plight of the people of East Timor and the need for urgent humanitarian measures, unrestricted access to the territory by qualified international observers, and efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of this tragic conflict.

With respect to this last point, I commend to my colleagues attention the letter to U.N. Secretary General Perez de Cuellar originated by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. YATRON], the chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Chairman YATRON is urging the United Nations to renew its interest in the situation in East Timor and to initiate actions to help the suffering people of that territory. I congratulate the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his letter and his leadership.

There is little doubt that the case of East Timor continues to have a claim on the attention of all those who support freedom, human rights, and human dignity. On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, the international community should know that the plight of the people of East Timor has not been forgotten by the U.S. Congress and will not be forgotten in the future.

December 10 marks International Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the signing in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is clear that the rights set forth in that document today are being denied to the people of East Timor by the occupying forces of Indonesia. The universal declaration makes it clear that the denial of basic human rights anywhere in the world is a matter of concern to all civilized people.

As we reflect upon International Human Rights Day and the meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should keep in mind the suffering of East Timor. East Timor may be a small territory, far removed from us, but its burden truly must be our own. Let us bring to bear on the Timor tragedy the prestige and moral influence of the United States.

I urge my colleagues to join with me to cosponsor the East Timor resolution I am introducing today. I also ask my colleagues for their support in obtaining a hearing on the resolution and on recent developments in East Timor.

For the benefit of my colleagues, the text of the resolution follows, as well as the August 28, 1985, press release of the U.S. Catholic Conference on East Timor:

H. CON. RES. 244

Concurrent resolution to express the sense of Congress regarding East Timor

Whereas an estimated 100,000 East Timorese out of a population of less than 700,000 have died since the invasion and occupation of East Timor by the Government of Indonesia, which began on December 7, 1975;

Whereas armed conflict persists in East Timor;

Whereas threats of food shortages and medical problems persist in some areas of East Timor;

Whereas international access to and the free flow of information from East Timor remain restricted;

Whereas the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor is denied full freedom of expression and is subject to intimidation by Indonesian authorities;

Whereas Indonesian authorities have instituted a birth control program in East Timor without the full knowledge and consent of the people of the terrority and despite large-scale loss of life there since 1975;

Whereas Indonesian authorities have placed many East Timorese in resettlement areas against their wishes where many of them are prevented from raising crops;

Whereas Amnesty International issued a report in June 1985 which called attention to systematic violations of human rights in East Timor;

Whereas in a statement made in July 1984 Pope Paul II expressed concern over the human rights situation in East Timor and the need for international relief agencies to operate freely in the territory, and expressed the hope that particular consideration would be given to the ethnic, religious, and cultural identity of the people of East Timor;

Whereas in August 1985 the United States Catholic Conference called attention to a letter sent in June 1985 by Cardinal John O'Connor of New York to Msgr. Carlos Ximenes Belo, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor, which expressed support for the struggle to preserve and enhance the dignity of life of the East Timorese people and for their right to live in peace and freedom; and

Whereas 157 East Timorese political prisoners were tried in Indonesian tribunals between December 1983 and June 1985 without the presence of qualified international observers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that the President should take all appropriate measures to encourage the Government of Indonesia to—

(1) maintain and expand access to and guarantee freedom of movement in East Timor for humanitarian organizations so that such organizations can carry out their humanitarian operations to the fullest extent feasible.

(2) allow unhindered access to East Timor for journalists, church delegations, and human rights groups that seek to visit the territory;

(3) guarantee full freedom of expression for and end intimidation of the Roman Catholic Church in East Timor;

(4) allow an impartial international examination of population limitation measures instituted in East Timor and end all such measures that do not have the full consent and knowledge of those directly concerned;

(5) allow qualified international observers to be present at trial proceedings that involve East Timorese political prisoners;

(6) allow an impartial international investigation of the conditions that exist in areas of East Timor where East Timorese have been resettled by Indonesian authorities; and

(7) work with the Governments of Portugal and the United States to develop initiatives that address the sources of conflict in East Timor and that bring an authentic peace to East Timor.

CARDINAL VOICES SUPPORT FOR EAST TIMOR CATHOLICS

WASHINGTON.—Support for the "struggle to preserve and enhance the dignity of life" of Catholics in East Timor has been expressed by John Cardinal O'Connor of New